

*The*  
GREAT COMMISSION

---

WENTWORTH F. STEWART

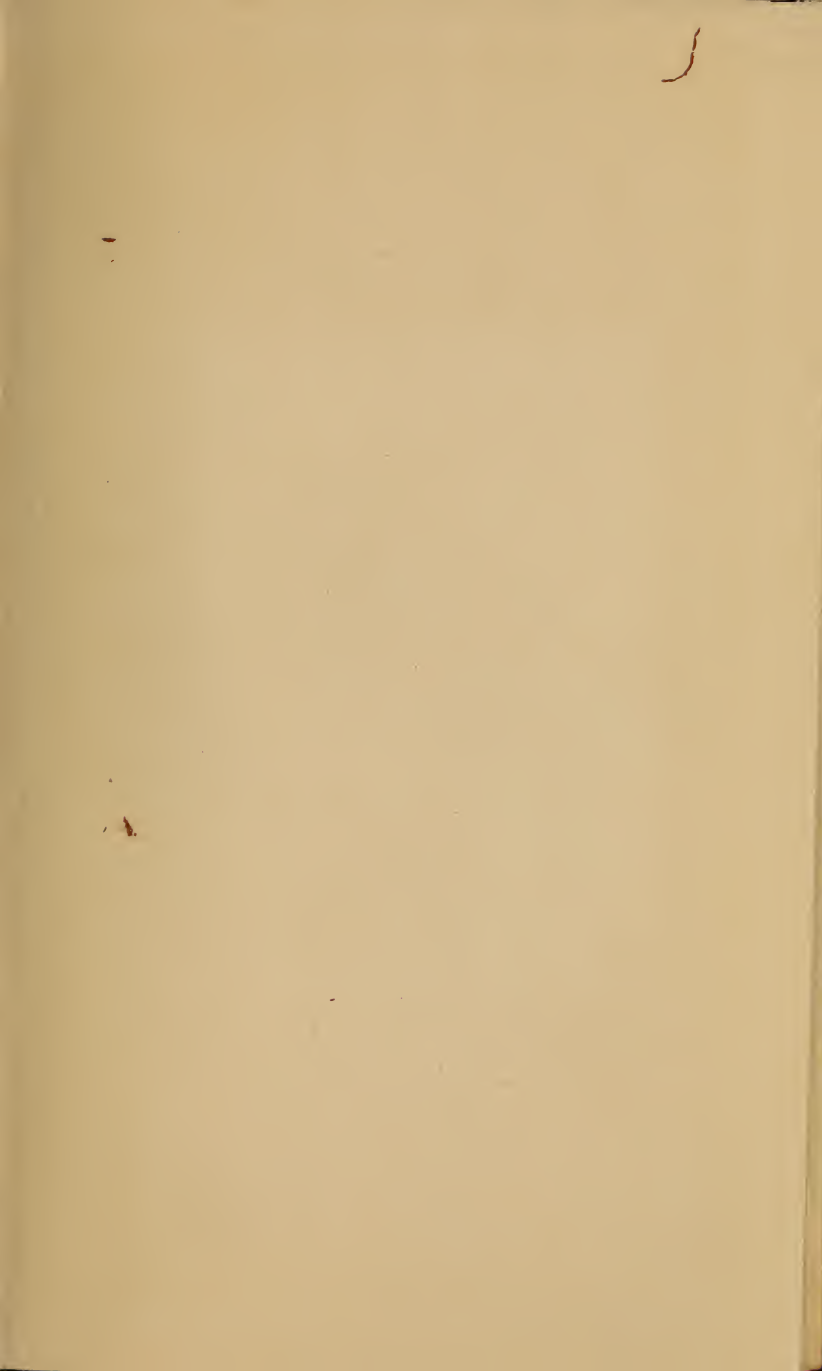


Class BV3790

Book .S83

Copyright N<sup>o</sup>                     

COPYRIGHT DEPOSIT









# The Great Commission

By *all*  
Wentworth F. Stewart

Introduction by  
Bishop Joseph F. Berry  
and  
Theodore S. Henderson

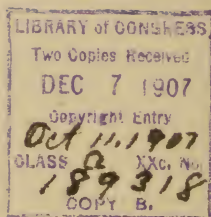


1  
2  
0 2 2  
2 3  
2 2 2  
2 2 2

NEW YORK: EATON & MAINS  
CINCINNATI: JENNINGS & GRAHAM

*c19072*

BV3790  
583



Copyright, 1907, by  
EATON & MAINS.

5



at once 11.00  
Paid APR 10 1937

# CONTENTS

---

## CHAPTER I

### THE EVANGELISTIC SITUATION

	PAGE
Indicative Problems.....	4
The Problem of Alienation.....	4
The Problem of Indifference.....	7

## CHAPTER II

### THE CHURCH FACING THE EMERGENCY

Forcing Results Must Give Way to Generating Conditions.....	10
The Gospel Has Not Lost Its Power.....	12
A Life-Giving Gospel Demands a Life-Saving Church.....	14
Return to First Principles.....	18

## CHAPTER III

### THE GREAT COMMISSION RENEWED

Discipleship Needs Reinterpretation.....	24
"Back to Christ".....	26
At His Feet.....	28
"In His Steps".....	30
The Upper Room.....	31
Power for Service.....	33

## CHAPTER IV

### THE EVANGELISTIC ATTITUDE, OR THE CHRISTIAN VISION OF THE PRODIGAL WORLD

The Condescending Lord.....	38
The Compassionate Christ.....	40
The Optimism of Jesus.....	43
Appealing to Men.....	49

# CONTENTS

## CHAPTER V

### THE CORRECT MEASURE OF THE EVANGELISTIC SPIRIT, OR THE COST OF SAVING THE WORLD

	PAGE
Humanity Is Away from the Church Because the Church Is Away from Humanity.....	53
We Cannot Save the World by a Committee.....	56
We Cannot Import nor Organize a Revival.....	59
The Urgency of the Inner Consciousness.....	61
"He Saved Others, Himself He Could Not Save".	64
We Must Not Push the World Off Our Hearts....	66
"He Went a Little Farther".....	69

## CHAPTER VI

### ABIDING EVANGELISM; A NEW EMPHASIS

Take Christ to Men.....	73
The Church Must Go into the World, or the World Will Come into the Church.....	75
This Will Give Entrance to Communities from Which We Are Now Barred.....	79
This Larger Conception Means Larger Results....	82
Furnishes the Only Condition of Continuous Evangelism .....	84

## CHAPTER VII

### THE PREACHER, AND HIS PART

"An Apostle of Jesus Christ".....	89
A Crucial Man.....	91
A Sensitive Student.....	94
He Will Be a Preacher of the Prophetic Note....	96
Evangelistic Preaching for Effect.....	98
Stake One's Life for a Cause.....	101
Conclusion.....	102

## INTRODUCTION

BISHOP J. F. BERRY, D.D., LL.D.

Mr. Stewart has given us a *living* book. He writes with a stylus of steel. Several illuminating volumes have come from that pen during the past few years, but none has gripped the vital principles of evangelism like this one. To write a few lines of introduction to these burning chapters is a privilege which I prize.

This question of evangelism is ablaze. Ministers are preaching about it, editors are writing about it, conventions and convocations are discussing it. The Church is seeking to ascertain its duty concerning it, and the desire to know the best methods of reaching the unsaved is widespread and eager.

Certain forms of professional evangelism have had their day. The methods employed were unduly mechanical. Too much stress was placed upon the human

## INTRODUCTION

element. The organization was over-organized. The pastor's place in the movement was too small. Meager responsibility was carried by the people in the pew. Great interest was aroused. Much enthusiasm was generated. Multitudes of people became "interested." But the permanent results have been alarmingly small. A better day has dawned. This *book* is an index finger pointing to that day.

"Pastoral evangelism" is the key-note of the new crusade. The normal minister is an evangelist. His chief business is to reach unsaved people. His heart glows with an intense passion for souls. He may not be eloquent; he may not be magnetic; he may not be an expert master of assemblies; he may not be resourceful in the manipulation of congregations as some evangelists are. But he will harvest souls. The man who shirks this work, pleading lack of adaptation, is not a normal minister of Jesus Christ.

The pastor-evangelist will discover

## INTRODUCTION

mighty evangelistic forces in the membership of his church. He will preach the doctrine that every true Christian has the spirit of the propaganda upon him, and that a church member who is indifferent to the spread of Christ's kingdom is not a Christian at all. These forces of his Church—lawyers, doctors, business men, teachers, mothers—he will organize, instruct, direct and inspire. He will guide them into the waiting harvest fields—will be the leader of the evangelistic forces of his own church. If the business ability represented in our official boards, the sagacity and devotion represented in our Ladies' Aid and Women's Missionary Societies, the talent represented in our brigades of Sunday school teachers, and the enthusiasm represented in the Epworth League could all be harnessed for the work of soul-winning and baptized with the fires of real pentecost, what would not be done in thousands of our churches ?

These and kindred phases of modern

## INTRODUCTION

evangelism stand out with splendid emphasis upon these pages. He who reads the first chapter will read all. I expect the little volume to have a wide and an appreciative reading, and that pastors and people who read will be enriched, instructed and blessed.

JOSEPH H. BERRY.

## INTRODUCTION

REV. THEODORE S. HENDERSON, D.D.

The conviction that we are now in the midst of an evangelistic awakening is the reason for this volume. The evangelistic note, the most difficult note to strike and maintain, is becoming dominant in the pulpit. Thorough-going, sane, continuous, sympathetic evangelism is being demanded by the pew as the solvent for the ills of modern society. The supreme need is not for evangelistic methods, but for evangelistic men who dare to infuse the evangelistic motive into every department of life and Christian service. The Church has an evangelistic conscience; we are conscious that evangelistic triumph is imperative. But we need to have that evangelistic conscience awakened to such a degree that evangelistic confidence shall be created and maintained; confidence enough in the evangel of Christ that noth-



## INTRODUCTION

ing else will save men from sin, and that this evangel when proclaimed fearlessly, faithfully, and fully by spirit-filled messengers will transform sinful men into the likeness of Christ. Methodism was once aflame with evangelistic courage; such a courage that defied the power of sin and Satan, that scorned difficulties, was careless of the case of custom, that dared indulge in justifiable irregularities in the way of method, in order that Christ could be brought to men. We need a new baptism of that sort of evangelistic courage in order to conquer. A triumphant evangelism demands an evangelistic consecration that will give its all to win for Christ; no sacrifice too costly; no labor too exhausting; no price too great. Are not "blood" and "blessing" synonymous in root meaning? Then it follows, no blood, no blessing. Machinery, methods, meetings; these are not to be discredited; but men—evangelistic men—men with an evangelistic conscience, men with evangelistic confidence, men with evangelistic



## INTRODUCTION

courage, men with evangelistic consecration; only men like this can contribute to evangelistic conquest.

This book will help to make such evangelistic men. Its author has proved these principles and precepts in practice as a pastor, presiding elder and evangelist. Its translation into the life of the ministry and laity of Methodism will make an evangelistic Church worthy of the name. It is a worthy companion of "The Evangelistic Awakening" and these companion volumes in the hands of the younger ministry whose spirit shall be that of the Methodist fathers meeting triumphantly the vexing problems of the modern pastor.

T. S. HENDERSON.



## CHAPTER I

### THE EVANGELISTIC SITUATION

EVERY movement in Christian history that has made more than a ripple upon the world's life has been met with some perplexing and stubborn problems that have only been solved by intense devotion to great fundamental principles. When the Christian Church is calm and pacific, has no serious misgivings nor difficult problems, we are not to esteem it necessarily a sign of genuine prosperity; it is quite as likely to be an indication of stagnation, if not of spiritual death. That this strenuous and restless age has at last found some corresponding restlessness and urgency in the Church of Christ is one of the most hopeful signs of our day. That there is an evangelistic awakening throughout the church, and that this awakening is widespread and deep enough to have laid hold upon the strongest minds and stirred the most vital forces, there can be no question.

## THE GREAT COMMISSION

But we must not mistake an evangelistic awakening for a real regenerative and reconstructive revival of religion. The awakening, as vital as it is, is only preliminary to the revival; but it is a most hopeful sign of the thoroughness of the revival toward which the church is moving that such a general awakening precedes it. The weakness of many past revivals, and the general inefficiency of all merely local and temporary revivals, is that they have not been preceded by any thorough evangelistic awakening. The gradual coming of this awakening should not be considered a misfortune; it gives time to set the Christian household in order, so that serious reaction may not follow, and that the constructive process may achieve the largest permanent results looking toward a continuous evangelism.

It is the gradual character of this awakening that has led the church to face the most difficult and stubborn evangelistic problems of her history. These problems to many people are almost staggering,

## THE EVANGELISTIC SITUATION

and they cannot see any real sign of an awakening, much less a revival of religion. But the very fact that the problems have come to the surface, are lifting themselves, and standing like great mountain barriers in the path of the church, is the most assuring sign that the church is waking up to a serious consideration of her mission.

This widespread and deep movement is the more significant because it grows out of an important admission, namely, that so serious is the situation in numberless churches and communities where merely "holding the fort" has failed to sustain the strength of the church, that this has led the churches to see that if they are to keep to their ideals as institutions, they must move out and "rescue the perishing" or cease to hold to their evangelistic principles. The time has arrived now for the church not merely to make a theoretical study of these problems, but to face them with heroic determination to adjust itself to meet the emergency, though the solu-

## THE GREAT COMMISSION

tion of these involve the absolute reconstruction of the policy of the church and a genuine renewal of its spirit.

### INDICATIVE PROBLEMS

It is not within the province of this discussion to enter extensively into the specific problems that face the church and offer some particular remedy for them; we simply call attention to two stubborn conditions before the church today as illustrations and indications of the general situation.

### THE PROBLEM OF ALIENATION

The great labor and other organizations of men embracing so largely the common people (of the world) who "heard Jesus gladly," are alienated from the church; and nearly all the rank and file of men outside of those interested in the great corporations of industry and commerce are more or less in sympathy with them. We are not now offering any excuse for the attitude these men sustain toward organized Christianity; we have little sym-



## THE EVANGELISTIC SITUATION

pathy with much of their policy, for their leaders are in many instances making this an excuse behind which to hide, and often a club with which to strike at heads of corporations who chance to be members of the Christian Church. Nevertheless, the stubborn fact stands forth, namely, that millions of accumulations, even though large beneficence flow from them, millions of wealth with gifts that involve no sacrifice, will never be made to appear consistent with membership in the Christian Church; and it is clearly apparent that a church of five hundred millionaires would be infinitely less efficient in saving this world than a church of five hundred workingmen.

Only recently there was instituted in one of our large cities an evangelistic movement with the union of all the churches of a great denomination. In due time the meetings shifted from a church of the so-called middle class, to the most fashionable church in the city—a church of millionaires in considerable

## THE GREAT COMMISSION

numbers. The newspapers, with their slight ability to detect the basal and vital things about such movements, nevertheless, were led to comment extendedly upon what would be done with a revival movement in a church constituted chiefly of such people; and when, in keeping with the custom, the organization in the new field was effected and these (Wall Street) men were given lists of names of persons to confer with respecting their religious welfare, one could but discern a vein of humor beneath the report, as though such a policy were nearly ridiculous; not because these were not respectable citizens, reputable churchmen, and perhaps even consistent Christians, but because this picture of wealth and luxury placed over against the gospel of Him who "had not where to lay his head," who "was despised and rejected of men," who "could not save himself and others," who went to the cross and died that men might live, and committed to his disciples this kind of gospel mission, to be carried out by



## THE EVANGELISTIC SITUATION

this kind of spirit, this as the theme and appeal of the evangelist in charge, as of every true evangelist, made these conditions and forces seem little less than ridiculous as a means of a revival movement to save the community.

This is only an intimation; there are vast throngs of people in various departments of life today who more or less conscientiously stand aloof from all evangelizing efforts because of the apparent inconsistency between the self-sacrificing character of the theme of the preacher and the easygoing, self-indulgent practice of the people.

## THE PROBLEM OF INDIFFERENCE

Infinitely more stubborn is the problem of indifference, refusing utterly to be disturbed by what we commonly call evangelistic or revival forces. This condition is almost universal; the prejudice against spectacular evangelism is being worn away, but indifference still rests like a great paralysis upon the mass of people

## THE GREAT COMMISSION

who are not Christians. Except in rare cases, where conditions are traditionally peculiar as in isolated communities, or where some spiritual cyclone (if such it is) sweeps down upon an entire community under very unusual leadership, the average evangelistic effort, whether by local or imported leadership, whether by ordinary or extraordinary forces, scarcely touches the great mass of unconverted people. We have observed these conditions carefully, and note that in nearly all instances, whether congregations are large or small, the percentage of unconverted or nonprofessing Christians is infinitely meager. We were in a church recently which was crowded with, perhaps, twelve hundred people, where the meeting had been in progress several weeks under the leadership of a noted evangelist, and when the invitation was given it was evident that there were not fifty persons present who did not belong to some Christian church. Not long since we heard one of the most world-renowned

## THE EVANGELISTIC SITUATION

evangelists address on Sunday afternoon a congregation of men that filled every sitting of a great church, not less than one thousand in number, and from every indication there were not twenty-five non-Christian men in that vast audience. The assembly of these great congregations, and especially this latter, is a very hopeful indication so far as a general awakening in the church is concerned, but it does not encourage us with respect to reaching the great unconverted throng. Most eloquent, earnest, and attractive preaching, and music that would often draw the people of the world to some other than a religious place, do not get even a consideration from the mass; and most extravagantly organized efforts of evangelistic campaigning rarely phase the situation.

## CHAPTER II

### THE CHURCH FACING THE EMERGENCY

We are confident that there will be no solution to this problem from the pen or lips, or by a display of the policy of any man or men who attempt it by the way of method. It is clear that the most expert evangelists, and the keenest and most earnest specialists, who place chief emphasis upon plans and methods cannot be sure of success in demonstration of their own policies, for most successful evangelists frequently fail in certain places, and succeed in many others only after they have taken time for the actual generation of evangelistic conditions.

### FORCING RESULTS MUST GIVE WAY TO GENERATING CONDITIONS

We must turn our attention to the generation of evangelistic conditions and the preparation for a revival by means of these conditions. This is infinitely more

## FACING THE EMERGENCY

important than the direct attempt to create revivals. Right conditions will bring revivals, and it is certain that revivals which grow out of conditions that prevail through preparation, have two great advantages: they are sure to be more genuine, because more spontaneous; and bound to be less reactionary, because their own conditions sustain them and mature their fruits. The preparation for the revival is, therefore, to be studied with greater care than the exercises or activities by which the tangible results are gathered.

The far-reaching and abiding character of the revival is chiefly in preparatory conditions; marked examples of this are the wonderful and sweeping revivals occurring under the leadership of Mr. Sunday. The extensive preparation for his meetings becomes so all-absorbing for weeks before, as to stir the whole community, and make him and his movement by far the biggest thing on hand, and, perhaps, the greatest event the community has ever known. This gives great force of religious concen-

## THE GREAT COMMISSION

tration, and when his work is begun so thoroughly are all the people awake to it that the wires are laid to every man, woman, and child in the community, and everything becomes ablaze at once.

The great demand of the present hour is the adoption of some fundamental principle and policy that will be productive of results through any earnest leadership and coöperation; some process that will bring with it, and leave behind it, a truly sensitized evangelistic atmosphere.

## THE GOSPEL HAS NOT LOST ITS POWER

It is questioned by many in these days whether the gospel has not lost its power; and it is even, with very forcible argument and illustration, affirmed by others that it has. These statements are made because in many instances the church has lost its power; and this is so true that a real evangelistic appeal will often be met with greater response apart from any church organization than in connection with it.



## FACING THE EMERGENCY

Jesus could not do mighty works in certain places in his day because of the people's unbelief. He cannot do mighty works in this day through his church while that church is a barrier rather than a bulwark to faith, generating obstructive unbelief, even though, when reduced to the last analysis, it is unbelief in the church rather than in the Christ.

The gospel has not lost its power, but the manifestations of that power today are not in proven revelations and miracles of grace that reveal what he did for us long ago but what he inspires us to do for others today. This is not assuming that all the blame for the absence of a genuine and forceful evangelistic life in the church is due to the presence of wealth and luxury, that wealthy people are more selfish necessarily than others; but it is an indication that the evangelistic principle and spirit will not thrive until the church renews its conception of its mission, begins to revolutionize its spirit by the cultivation of the heroic and self-sacrificing, by

## THE GREAT COMMISSION

which alone it can fulfill this mission, either among rich or poor, and by the adoption of which policy it will speedily remove the barriers of unbelief and find itself clothed with the power of the Christ when it goes forth in the spirit of the Christ.

### A LIFE-GIVING GOSPEL DEMANDS A LIFE-SAVING CHURCH

Because of its peculiar mission the Christian Church occupies a position altogether unique, and has no correspondence in any other form of organization. There have been, and are now, a great many worthy and highly commendable institutions whose mission to the world is such that we can accord them our sympathy, if not support. But there is no institution in this world that occupies the place held by the Christian Church, for beneath every other organization there is more or less the element of selfishness, the appeal of mutual helpfulness, if not of personal reward; but the Church of Christ invites men to its altars and its fellowship, en-



## FACING THE EMERGENCY

lists them in its activities, without any appeal whatever to self; invited to join other institutions, men urge upon you their advantages and benefits, but, invited to unite in the discipleship of Jesus, the appeal is not what you will get out of it, but what you can put into it. It is true that there are advantages accruing to men in the Christian Church that might well appeal to man's higher self, but they are not to be placed over against a man's time, energy, and gifts as a means of inducement. The world is well aware that this is the theoretical position occupied by the Christian Church, and they have a right to expect some reasonable correspondence in the life of the church.

All along our shores are life-saving stations, with heroic men trained to be rescuers of human lives. What storm-tossed sailor baffling with the waves does not feel a degree of safety because of those who are ready to risk their lives in his behalf?

The Christian Church is expected to stand for this in a moral and spiritual

## THE GREAT COMMISSION

sense and its men and women trained in this service are useless unless they possess heroic qualities that make them forget themselves in the interest of those to be rescued. To the interest of others all other things give way; if they have duties and pleasures, they are always in subjection to the supreme end to which they have given their lives. If the Christian Church is to continue to sing "Rescue the perishing," with any hope of inspiring confidence upon the part of a lost world, it will have to enter into this service with more genuine heroism, and with a deeper spirit of self-sacrifice.

Since writing these last lines my eyes have fallen on the evening paper, which announces the invention or perfection of a new instrument for the saving of life. The invention does away with all necessity for lifeboats, and while it greatly increases the chance of rescue it reduces in the same degree the peril and sacrifice heretofore necessary upon the part of life-saving crews. The modern world is ex-

## FACING THE EMERGENCY

tremely alert in seeking to reduce the perils of mortality, and it is equally awake to the reduction of risks, sacrifice, and costly service necessary to these accomplishments. It is high time that the Christian Church become imbued with the same ambition to save the immortal.

But we must not drift into the error so natural to these days of increasing comforts and reduction of hardships, and assume that by patent plans and transfer of burdens from shoulders to machines we can also transfer the burden of soul-saving from our hearts and lives to any patent evangelistic method, or any general church organization which we support, but into which there goes little of our heart's blood.

There is no substitute in God's economy for self-sacrifice in saving the world. This unalterable law is in our own interest as well as those for whom we toil, for except we give our lives away we cannot save them. It is to many amazing that the people about us are not more interested in

## THE GREAT COMMISSION

religious things, seem not even to care for their own soul's welfare; but so long as the vital matters of the Christian Church rest so lightly upon the hearts of Christ's followers, we need not expect the world to be greatly moved; so long as Christians can subordinate religious work to all other matters, giving everything else first place, there can be no genuine evangelistic movement; until first things in theory and in creed are made first things in devotion, until things we claim to be worth most, and most significant to the world, are purchased and paid for with a larger degree of personal sacrifice, we shall not see the kindling of a great revival spirit throughout the church.

## RETURN TO FIRST PRINCIPLES

The wonderful inventions, discoveries, and developments of modern science in the last half century, together with the fact that the church no longer sustains an antagonistic, nor even doubtful attitude toward this, but rather rejoices in

## FACING THE EMERGENCY

every great development, has led the church quite naturally to feel that it must look to the novel for elements of success. But after failing to find any relief of its evangelistic situation in the direction of modernism, it is now almost universally reverting to the "old-fashioned revival" and trying to find the secret there. But in this its discoveries of evangelistic potentialities are chiefly peculiar to the age and conditions, and not necessarily fundamental or capable of universal and continuous efficiency. The church must look back still farther, and enter into a study of conditions obtaining before any religious conventionalities had arisen, and discover the plain, unincumbered principles of religious power by which this world first felt the regenerating force of the great evangel and the great evangelizers. We cannot believe that these principles put into the hands of peasant apostles, and used so mightily, are beyond the reach of the rank and file of the Church of Christ today.



## CHAPTER III

### THE GREAT COMMISSION RENEWED

Christ laid a great commission upon the hearts of his disciples; gradually, but surely, he led them as they sat at his feet into the vision of the length, breadth, height, and depth of the great task that was to be assigned them; and at the same time he was binding them in a fellowship of loyalty to himself that would commit them to any kind of service, no matter how much it cost. Little did they understand how large a contract lay before them in the ever-increasing meaning of discipleship; but by and by they came where they were reasonably ready for the burden of that great commission, and from the time he stood over against them, to say to them that their days of training were over, their visible Teacher and Leader was to retire, and they were to go out now to try their experience, their faith, their fortitude, and to do "greater works" even

## GREAT COMMISSION RENEWED

than he did, the significance of it began to dawn upon their consciousness, and their hearts throbbed beneath the biggest burden ever assumed by mortal man.

Jesus, anxious that this commission should rest heavily upon their hearts, counseled them to tarry in the quiet of the Jerusalem chamber, until it grew into all its proportions; and the more it grew upon them, the more they felt the need of the divine power which they were to receive. They were not *endued* with power from on high, until they were fully *imbued* with the sense of their commission. From this time on nothing is more evident than the tremendous pressure under which these disciples labored. Reading the record of their movements, you feel that they are under the spell of a great obligation, and that they felt not simply its dignity, but its urgency; they had heard him say, "As the Father hath sent me, even so send I you," and as they reflected upon the meaning of their Lord's mission of sacrifice, their devotion to him and his

## THE GREAT COMMISSION

purpose grew into a burning passion, until nothing could withstand it. This great declaration to "go and disciple the nations" lay hold of them; there was never any uncertainty as to the specific mission upon which they were sent; their mission was no vague, indefinite program; speedily the world rolled in upon their hearts, and they never once by any path of ease or compromise attempted to unload that burden. Their movements, as here recorded, with a simplicity of organization and great personal earnestness, stand in wide contrast over against the aims and efforts of organized Christianity as it appears in history.

The church of today must hear and accept anew the divine commission to save the world.

The great problem before the ministry and the evangelistic leadership is the lack of a supreme sense of the Christian commission. The saving of the world does not rest heavily upon the hearts of the Christian discipleship of today; and let



## GREAT COMMISSION RENEWED

us not think that by multiplying services, or devising new ways and means we can ever get it upon their hearts. Nor is there any hope of a divine power that will startle the world in pentecostal-like fashion until something else is accomplished in the way of preparation for that power. There will be no general manifestation of peculiar power in the Christian Church until there is a larger and deeper sense of the need of that power because the scope and weight of the Christian commission has taken an awful grip upon the heart of the church. The imbuement of this commission in an all-absorbing manner must precede the endowment of power from on high.

When God's people are ready "is the day of his power"; Christian people cannot expect anything like a great spiritual movement while their lives are so lacking in what corresponds to the meaning of discipleship as outlined by the Master, and as it laid hold of those men of old.

# THE GREAT COMMISSION

## DISCIPLESHIP NEEDS REINTERPRETATION

The first great evangelistic essential to-day is a reinterpretation of Christian discipleship. Two things have greatly modified, if not demoralized, the evangelistic life of the church through all the ages. These have not been defined in every age in exactly the same terms, but they have stood for the same things.

The first is the extreme emphasis upon the so-called "scheme of redemption," which has engaged the thought of the church to such an extent that in almost every period the brightest minds and strongest personalities in leadership have been taken up with either setting forth or defending this scheme rather than in appealing to men to accept Christ and find out the doctrine. The other has been the unconscious magnifying of the organizations of Christianity and the increasing feeling that method and machinery would save the world. The former transfers all responsibility back to God after the

## GREAT COMMISSION RENEWED

mere presentation of the formula; the other transfers it to a machine, and the only personal responsibility is to find the best machine, keep it in best repair, and work it for all it is worth. Both tend to reduce the personal equation in discipleship and service to the very minimum. The absence of this vital element has become so evident in these latter days that great emphasis is being laid upon "personal evangelism"; and this is the point for emphasis, if we do not make the mistake of ringing the changes on a term behind which there is little meaning.

We are in danger of committing the blunder of talking and urging personal evangelism, with the idea of some method, some kind of harness one puts on, by which personal work is made effective; or of emphasizing the necessity of a personal consecration that amounts to only a passive submission to the divine power which would make men mere automatons; this construction is too frequently put upon the long tarrying in the upper room

## THE GREAT COMMISSION

at Jerusalem and hypnotic power of the supernatural believed to accompany it.

We need a revival of personal evangelism, but we need it as the result of a reinterpretation of Christian discipleship. It needs to be the direct product of those elements which made these disciples such mighty personal forces in the kingdom; it must grow out of an unselfish surrender to Jesus Christ and a cultured devotion to him, accompanied by that great sense of the disciple's commission that rested upon their hearts long ago.

### “BACK TO CHRIST”

“Back to Christ” is no longer a novelty in theological dictum; it is almost stale with the commonest use of men, who little apprehended its significance, and more so with others, who only ring the changes on it as a new ideal. But “back to Christ” is a most important slogan, and the evangelistic church and ministry ought to take it from the hands of those who have made no use of it except as a high-sounding

## GREAT COMMISSION RENEWED

term of liberalism and make it the slogan of our evangelistic call. "Back to Christ," not to a Christ who was a beautiful ideal of life, character, and teaching only; but back to a Christ whose life was one of sacrifice, who could not save himself and save others, who waded through gardens of sorrow and found the common pores of his flesh the only safety valves for his burdened heart, and who committed his disciples to the same course, led them to his mount of vision, and sent them out with his passion "to seek and to save."

Whether in the church at large, or the individual church, over which we chance to have direction, and to which we minister, the only means of creating such conditions and spirit will be by returning to the first principles of discipleship, and leading the Christians of today, as did the Master long ago, step by step, until they actually come to have a genuine vision of discipleship and become possessed of the original passion that accompanies it. Pentecost will be repeated with infinitely



## THE GREAT COMMISSION

greater force than of old when this larger world of today is allowed to press upon the hearts of his disciples—disciples who have a corresponding vision of the greatness of their task, in keeping with the increased greatness of the world.

### AT HIS FEET

It is clearly evident that much larger consideration must be given to the element of time, and the preparation that time alone can bring. Not that time is necessary with God, but time is necessary for men, else God would not have taken it as he has in preparation for his movements among men. Revivals may come *here and there*; indeed, they are bound to come by the devotion that accompanies this preparation but they are not likely to be widespread, nor have the depth desired; much less are they likely to furnish the conditions for continuous evangelism.

There must be repeated that which was carried out in the plan of Jesus; those disciples were utterly unable at first to

## GREAT COMMISSION RENEWED

be impressed with the meaning of his mission and their mission. Jewish formalism and nominalism had made them almost imperturbable to his teaching, and it was only little by little that he forced this vision upon them. Wise and tactful, yet never compromising, he kept them face to face with the great ideal; and they were scarcely aware of the high road of vision over which he was leading them until at last it broke in upon their consciousness. The church must return to *discipleship* and sit again at the feet of Jesus. The ministry must to the very best of its ability keep the disciples face to face with the vital things of their mission, and wisely and skillfully lead them from the view of Christianity that is merely formal and nominal to the real vision of a self-sacrificing discipleship, and give to them, amid their various perplexing and compromising principles and policies, the real vision, such as at last dawned upon those of old ere the Master startled them with the great commission.



## THE GREAT COMMISSION

### “IN HIS STEPS”

No single incident in the last two decades has more widely stirred the Christian world than the publication of that little simple book, *In His Steps*. It brought the church so vividly face to face with what discipleship means, and there was no getting away from its simple but fundamental principles. It restored to the church the long-observed vision of Christ and his disciples facing their task. Had the teaching of that little book been followed, had the ministry had the courage of their conviction, had greed, selfishness, and pride not hedged the church from pursuing the course of its vision, we should have had in due time as the result the greatest revival this country has ever known. It will require more than a single book, more than a single sermon, or series of sermons, to bring about deep and far-reaching revival conditions. Many books and sermons, with line upon line, sound, tolerant, kind, but emphatic

## GREAT COMMISSION RENEWED

and forceful, setting forth the only ground of Christian discipleship, will, if persistently followed, lead the church, as the Master did his disciples, to the point of vision where possibly the number may be temporarily reduced, but they that are left will be to the world of today what that little band of old was to the great, vile, and vulgar Roman empire.

All this will involve great problems, which demand the revision and reconstruction of the whole Christian creed touching our social, civic, and commercial life; and it will take time to bring men, where they are ready at the cost of all, to stick to the essentials of the great Christian program.

### THE UPPER ROOM

That it is necessary that a great spiritual power shall come upon the church in order to bring about large results no one questions; that this power is just as available now as ever few, perhaps, doubt; but that this power will manifest itself

## THE GREAT COMMISSION

in any manner defined by previous expressions is neither certain nor necessary; much less is it likely that precisely the same passive waiting in any upper room will bring it down. Have not the essentials of Pentecost, or of its accompanying spiritual power, been misconstrued, and are we not likely to "tarry" under a misapprehension? What was vital to that day of Pentecost? It was not a particular upper room, nor a long wait for God to answer, so far as God was concerned. The disciples had now come into full possession of their commission; it was no longer a mere suggestion of their Master but a great and supreme obligation; it involved, as they had begun to see, absolute loyalty to their Lord in the face of conditions most exacting; this great and far-reaching commission must not merely flash upon them and create a temporary impulse, start a hurried movement for which no sufficient preparation had been made to sustain and carry to its consummation. This was to be a con-

## GREAT COMMISSION RENEWED

tinuous movement, a world enterprise; to it, they were committed for life, and at whatever cost. But they were human and must have time in the quiet of that upper room to pray, to talk with one another, to reflect upon the meaning of it all, until this commission had settled down upon them and they became thoroughly imbued with its wide and far-reaching significance, and were ready, at whatever cost, to commit themselves to carrying it out; then there moved out into the old Roman empire the most mysterious and irresistible company of men that ever attempted to turn this world upside down.

### POWER FOR SERVICE

Let us understand that waiting before God in prayer to secure a power by which things are easily and speedily done, the mere acceptance and accordance with a so-called doctrine of Pentecost, will never bring this about. It will be, when the disciples have been led to see the greatness

## THE GREAT COMMISSION

of their commission, the urgency of the whitening harvest, and the Master at whose feet they have sat, looking down appealingly for loyalty. When the great commission, sounding the very depths of their souls, saturates their life and fills all their horizon, so that power is necessary because something *must* be done, and power is ready because they are ready to use it, when this has been reached in Christian discipleship, there will be reason to hope for an unusual manifestation of divine power.

Thomas Aquinas was once in the presence of the Pope when he was counting a large pile of gold. "Thomas," said the Pope, "the church can no longer say 'Silver and gold have I none';" to which Thomas replied: "No, nor can she longer say, 'In the name of Jesus of Nazareth rise up and walk.'" Here is a vast range of application for today. The church has lost its power, or, better, perhaps, the modern church has rarely come into possession of that power. Its path has been,



## GREAT COMMISSION RENEWED

for the most part, one of ease and luxury; discipleship has not been tested; there has grown up a notion that men can save themselves by a mere formal consent to Christianity, and save others by a contribution of money, time, or energy that never drew a pang from their souls, or a drop of blood from their hearts. The church, as in the time of Thomas Aquinas, believes tremendously in the cross, though with wider interpretation of its meaning; in the cross as a great fact in history "once for all," as a beautiful symbol and a forceful suggestion of a kind beneficence that expresses itself in the significant but very general and high-sounding terms of altruism; but it knows little about a cross that has in it jagged nails, which suggest the real pain to which men must yield their lives if they, too, would be living disciples linked with their Lord in saving the world.

When the living wires of human personalities in the discipleship of Jesus are laid bare for his service, there will be an

## THE GREAT COMMISSION

installation of divine energy, the voltage of which will be sufficient to shock this old world as no Pentecost in history has ever done.



## CHAPTER IV.

### THE EVANGELISTIC ATTITUDE, OR THE CHRISTIAN VISION OF THE PRODIGAL WORLD

In that remarkable little book, *The Passion For Souls*, Mr. Jowett has set forth this principle with great force. With Paul, he holds that we are to "fill up that which is behind of the affliction of Christ." "Are we in this succession? Does the cry of the world's need pierce the heart and ring even through the fabric of our dreams? Do we 'fill up' our Lord's suffering with our own sufferings? Here in my newspaper is a long casualty list from the seat of war; a column of the crimes of my city; or, here is a paragraph telling me about some massacres in China."

How does this take hold of us, or does it take hold of us at all? If not, then there is something wrong with our attitude; something wrong with our Christian vi-

## THE GREAT COMMISSION

sion. Paul, more than anyone before or since, interpreted and incarnated the attitude of his Lord, stood side by side with the Christ in the vision of the world. He said, "For me to live is Christ," and no one has ever disputed it, because through all those years the record of his life attests it.

### THE CONDESCENDING LORD

Paul laid supreme emphasis upon the condescension of Jesus; out of his great soul's vision came that picture of him who "though rich became poor," and so did he dwell upon this that he actually imbibed, yes, incorporated it into his own life; to him there was nothing in which to glory save the cross, which was the culmination of that unparalleled condescension.

One cannot read Paul's words without feeling that in the background of the vision that produced them, Jesus's condescension was supreme. Paul could not get away from the vision of him "who counted not his life dear unto himself"; "who died, the just for the unjust," and

## THE EVANGELISTIC ATTITUDE

“bore our sins in his body upon the tree.” Paul understood that this condescension of Jesus Christ was a spontaneous condescension; in other words, that it was a “passion.” We have too often lost the meaning of that term “the passion of Christ”; it is covered up in an ecclesiastical frame known as “Holy Week.” There was a “Holy Week” in the calendar of Jesus’s life; it contained the incidents, the outward vision, the physical appearances that alone could be recorded. But if Paul is right, the divine passion dates far back in the ages—behind the angels’ song and the Bethlehem cradle; it is away back beyond the prophet’s vision of that day, “when there was no eye to pity and no arm to save”; back behind the councils of grief, that fashioned the purpose which brought forth that supreme declaration of the divine passion, “God so loved the world.” It was the divine vision of a lost world that kindled the passion and renewed it again and again in the life of Jesus, until the world’s salvation was pro-

## THE GREAT COMMISSION

vided in the hour of his finished work upon the cross. Now and then there appears in the life of Christ a little revelation of what it was that reinforced his purpose to go to the cross, and intensified that purpose into a passion. Once He stood overlooking Jerusalem, and the pathetic lamentation that escaped his lips suggests his vision; again he saw the young ruler turn away, and was sad; again he bent over lost humanity beside Samaria's well, and could not get away until he had lifted that poor woman into life. It was this that made him fight to the bitter end in the wilderness, and made the hour in Gethsemane wakeful with agony. It was the recurring vision of the lost world that sent him, finally, to the cross.

### THE COMPASSIONATE CHRIST

Not until we have entered into the vision of our Christ concerning the world, is there in us enough deep and unfailing compassion to qualify us for this great work of drawing men to God. Human

## THE EVANGELISTIC ATTITUDE

prejudices are deep and strong; intolerance is a hard thing to overcome; it is deeply intrenched in our nature. You have a little glimpse of Paul, the bigot, Paul the persecutor, full of intolerance before his conversion; you have enough evidence in the expression of his disposition cropping out here and there through his Christian life to see what he would have been but for that revolutionizing power that turned him about, and kept control of his life all the while. When we realize how thoroughly this great, hard-headed, stout-hearted man came to be under the spell of such a passion we can account for it only because, again and again, he is found going over in his thought and trying to reproduce in his life the feelings and impulses of his condescending Lord. Whenever Jesus looked men in the face he had compassion on them; this statement is made concerning his vision of the multitude, and we can read it everywhere between the lines. We cannot think of Christ facing lost men

## THE GREAT COMMISSION

without a feeling of compassion. The individual might be worthy of severest condemnation, but he said, "Neither do I condemn thee." The multitude might be a worthless, low-lived throng, but to him they were "as sheep without a shepherd." What infinite compassion!

Unless we are possessed of this vision, we shall find ourselves often growing intolerant; intolerant because folks cannot be led to see eye to eye with us; intolerant because they will not act immediately in perfect harmony with our well-matured conceptions of conduct. Nothing more thoroughly disqualifies us for this work we face, the very first demand for which is the "charity that covers a multitude of sins." Only as this vision of a condescending and compassionate Lord is ours can we with Paul be "all things to all men" for the sake of winning them. How many souls have been driven away and hardened, how many communities today cannot be appealed to evangelistically, because of the arbitrary, intolerant, unyield-



## THE EVANGELISTIC ATTITUDE

ing methods of men in such services! Many very good men have blocked their own way, and the way of others, for years, to whole communities, by their spirit of intolerance; they have failed to travel with Paul the road of a condescending Christ, until, like him, they could be all things to all men in order to save them.

Only as we have this vision can we be possessed of

### THE OPTIMISM OF 'JESUS

that will make us successful in reaching and saving a lost world. There is no question but that the character of mediæval theology, with its shadows reaching well on down to this age, has had much to do with closing up the fountains of compassion and giving religious activity a cold and mechanical caste, which does not accord with the fundamental spirit of Jesus, so necessary with which to reach the world. A mere dogmatic appeal has little force in these days; it savors too much of bigotry and intolerance, and does not meet



## THE GREAT COMMISSION

even with the response of attention. When a man makes his boast that he preached on hell with great pleasure there is something wrong with his point of view, and more vitally still with his heart's attitude toward a lost world. That these things are vital to gospel preaching there can be no question, but unless a man enters upon such a sermon as he would shrink from the garden of Gethsemane, he ought never to preach it. It has been said by someone that "the tale of the divine pity was never yet believed from lips not filled with human pity."

"The old idea of God's awful severity might do for the day when a poor man might be put in jail for a grocer's bill and his wife and children left to starve, when men walked the streets or toiled in the fields with their owner's mark branded upon their forehead. When men were harsh they looked for a harsh God. Luther, asked whether the blessed in heaven will not be saddened by seeing their dearest friends tortured in hell, an-

## THE EVANGELISTIC ATTITUDE

swered: "Not the least in the world." Jonathan Edwards declared that "the view of misery of the damned will double the ardor of love and gratitude of the saints in heaven." Amid the uncertainties of this awful faith they sang the hymn which is called "Desperate Resolution," with its implied impeachment of the divine fidelity and compassion:

Perhaps he will admit my plea,  
Perhaps will hear my prayer;  
But if I perish I will pray,  
And perish only there.

What an alternative is suggested in these words, and how they measure the conception of God! And yet our fathers sang this stanza with earnest zeal and it is still in the Hymnal. (Butler.)

Thus mediæval theology clings to this age, colors the vision and poisons the atmosphere of many good and earnest Christians, so that when their activities are put to the test, they are not capable of producing effect; they are barred even from approach to men.

## THE GREAT COMMISSION

Never before in human history were the great questions of how to save the world pressed upon us as now. The time was when men could shut themselves up from the world and utterly forget the "other half"; amid such conditions as this a theology such as has been referred to could exist; such conditions made it possible for conscientious men to say, concerning not merely the heathen at a distance, but the heathen at hand: "God will convert them when he gets ready." But no such theology can survive the test of these days, when no man lives to himself; he picks up a newspaper every morning, and gets a panoramic view of the tragedies of a sin-cursed world, and before such a vision no compassionless theology will survive.

"The loveless do not see the truth of humanity. It is love that sees the wickedness of the city and weeps over it; it is love who sees the lingering beauty in a Mary Magdalene and yearns over it" (Jowett). It is never said of Jesus that when he looked over the city he con-

## THE EVANGELISTIC ATTITUDE

demned it; anyone can do that. It is infinitely easier (though a contradiction) to preach an evangel of condemnation, because it does not demand a remedy; easier to bear ourselves with a spirit of intolerance toward men who do not readily respond to our appeal, than to preach a real evangel and bear ourselves as real evangelists, weeping over people for what they are and may be, until the heart bleeds and we feel something of Calvary's meaning, for "when we cease to bleed we cease to bless."

In such a vision of the lost world are the possibilities of its salvation. "How many a heart has been revived and emancipated by knowing that somewhere else there was another heart moving toward it with the tenderness of a great love" (Van Dyke).

Robert Ingersoll was accustomed to say that "the gospel is not glad tidings of great joy but a message of gloom and sadness." Perhaps if Mr. Ingersoll had not been reared amid the atmosphere of such

## THE GREAT COMMISSION

a gloomy and hopeless theology, he might never have revolted against the message of life. There is a harsh, rigid side to truth; it needs to be preached, but preached as a part of a great law of God which governs all men for good, and which is therefore inevitable rather than the wrath of a good God and loving Father, pouring itself out on disobedient children.

If you want to make men believe, if you want to inspire them with faith in God, give them a vision of a God in whom they can believe. For in these days when so much emphasis is laid upon charity and sympathy, and when there are such manifestations of human benevolence, it is very difficult to inspire men with faith in any other kind of God than one of great pity and philanthropy, such as is represented in these gracious lines—

There's a wideness in God's mercy like the wideness  
of the sea,  
There's a kindness in his justice which is more than  
liberty.



## THE EVANGELISTIC ATTITUDE

For the love of God is broader than the measure of  
man's mind,  
And the heart of the Eternal is most wonderfully  
kind.

### APPEALING TO MEN

Jesus everywhere recognized the higher self and appealed to it. We can scarcely understand how to such an extent there has grown up the condemnatory type of evangelistic preaching and spirit; it is not characteristic of Jesus. Only when he is in the presence of the pharisaical hypocrites, does he bear himself thus; everywhere else his message is in the spirit of this fundamental statement, "I came not to condemn the world but that the world through me might have life." And in spite of every temptation, because of the vile character of life before him, he held himself under the influence of this great principle of charity and compassion, recognizing everywhere the higher self, and throwing about life, in correspondence with his uttered appeal, a cheering, warming, faith-inspiring atmosphere.

## THE GREAT COMMISSION

There is wonderful power in the atmosphere of personality; such an atmosphere radiates from every individual; and that atmosphere is increased by the aggressive attitude assumed in evangelistic work. This atmosphere quite as much as anything else determines whether we shall make a favorable approach to men. This consideration has been widely overlooked by evangelistic workers; they have seemed to think that the time, place, and condition of people, also the state of their own mind and spirit, had nothing to do with Christian service. Persons sometimes remark, "Well, I did my duty, anyway; I cleared my skirts," regardless of the state of mind in which the individual was left. Why will not Christian workers learn that this is not Christ's ideal, nor even is it the common-sense wisdom of the world; if they will analyze it, they may find that it is only the gratification of the sense of a false apprehension of what duty is. God can overrule the blunders, and he does, for we are all liable



## THE EVANGELISTIC ATTITUDE

to them; but not the persistent blunders that come from a bigoted and blind notion of duty which we have not sought to correct.

This is also vital touching the spirit of the evangelistic preacher. We cannot make our predominant note in preaching that of condemnation without cultivating a spirit of intolerance, which frequently develops into a harsh and unkind spirit. And this grows upon us while we are almost entirely unconscious of it; our tones are lacking in kindness, our sentences become keen and rasping, and all of this tends not only toward an atmosphere cold, chilling, and offensive, but it tends toward pessimism upon our part, and pessimism is an absolute disqualification for evangelistic service. On the other hand, the habit of dwelling upon the hunger of the world, and the sorrow of sin's consequences, in the spirit of a condescending Christ takes the harshness out of our tone and cultures a spirit of kindness and tolerance, that gives approach to men.

## THE GREAT COMMISSION

Go down into the slums amid hopeless and helpless humanity in the spirit of a cold, critical student of conditions, and you will find men drawing away from you, and turning their cold side and manifesting their meanest spirit. But go down there in the spirit of a condescending Christ, with love supreme, creating a warm and penetrating atmosphere, and you will find men moving toward you; you will patiently melt your way into their lives, and by the magnetism of the Christ lift them out of their sins and out of themselves into a life of hopefulness and self-respect.

Down in the human heart, crushed by the tempter,  
Feelings lie buried that grace can restore;  
Touched by a loving heart, wakened by kindness,  
Chords that were broken will vibrate once more.

This is true of all classes of people. "The heart of the world's hunger is the hunger of the heart." The average man likes genuine, manly, rugged heart-throbs born of real Christlike sympathy.

## CHAPTER V

### THE CORRECT MEASURE OF THE EVANGEL- ISTIC SPIRIT, OR THE COST OF SAVING THE WORLD

#### Humanity Is Away from the Church Because the Church Is Away from Humanity

Early in the discussion we referred to the attitude of alienation and indifference assumed by such large numbers of people while the church moves on in her usual course in their midst; this is such an evident problem and so stubborn, that it is almost despairing; we have deplored it, prayed over it, and tried every means of bringing men to the church. But we have overlooked very largely this fact: that humanity is away from the church because the church is away from humanity; the very constitution of Christianity, as understood today, and correctly so, is not fundamentally an ecclesi-

## THE GREAT COMMISSION

astical institution which saves men by its sacraments alone; the world has little confidence in the saving virtue of a church or ministry that puts chief emphasis upon ritualism and priesthood; that says our business is not to go to you; your business is to come to us. The world looks upon the Christianity of Jesus Christ not merely as an institution, principle, and spirit that says "Come," but a force that goes out into the highways of life; and they denounce Christians and the spirit of the church because it substitutes "Hold the fort" for "Rescue the perishing." The world interprets Christianity by the spirit of Him who represents himself as the Good Shepherd who goes out after the *one*, though the ninety and nine are in the fold; and they lose confidence in the easygoing method of the church that shows none of the shepherdlike concern, but contents itself with infinitely less than the ninety and nine.

In a great love feast at the seat of an Annual Conference on Sunday morning

## THE CORRECT MEASURE

the large church was filled in every part—galleries and chapel packed; as the love feast was about to conclude, and hundreds of people had not participated, the leader said: "Let all who have not had opportunity to testify stand, and let all other Christians stand with them." They arose, a great throng, and as they stood we looked about and could not see a single person in that audience of ten to fifteen hundred who was not standing. I remarked: "What a splendid sight!" to which an experienced minister responded: "Yes, you see we don't need evangelism here." How pathetic such a vision! Could there be any more desperate need of evangelism, when, in a large community where it is safe to assume one third of the population were neither Christians nor churchgoers, on a beautiful Sunday morning, at the seat of an Annual Conference, with a bishop about to preach, one could see scarcely an unconverted person in the audience? What a comment on the command the church had of that community!



## THE GREAT COMMISSION

We have been at ease in Zion, "holding the fort" too long; now when we make an occasional dash with our ranks out upon the life of the world it is not taken seriously by the great mass of people.

### WE CANNOT SAVE THE WORLD BY A COMMITTEE

Greatly to the credit of Christianity, and an exceedingly hopeful aspect of to-day, is the fact that the wealth and intelligence, the social and public prestige of the world, are largely on the side of the Christian religion, giving to it the sagacity, the generalship, the organized force, and the material resources so advantageous in pushing the interests of the kingdom of God. But from the days of Constantine until now one of the great problems has been to save the church from the peril of its material advantages; and this is one of our problems today. The church is not merely in danger but is actually imperiled by the dependence upon mechanical processes, growing out of so



## THE CORRECT MEASURE

largely increased material resources; this is not a sign, as some premillennialists assert, that the world is growing worse, and human nature more degenerate; it is the perfectly natural accompaniment of an inventive and mechanical age. "The man with the hoe" is only a relic of the past; in his day when things were to be done, they were *done*; brain and heart did them single-handed and alone; but today, when any real hard task is to be performed, we organize a company, buy a machine, or wait until some one invents one. No one denounces this as profane, Godless and faithless; we boast that these are the products of a Christian age, in which God is immanent, as never before. No sane person contends that intelligence, wealth, and material force, necessarily retard the kingdom; everyone knows that when dedicated to God, or in hands so dedicated, they are mighty adjuncts of the kingdom's forces; but they are only adjuncts; they are not substitutes for the brain, brawn, and heart—the living sacrifices. Our peril

## THE GREAT COMMISSION

lies in substitution; a large percentage of our people now do not have to do the harder, more drudging work of life; they buy a machine or hire a proxy; this principle is carried over into the church; anything to be done—appoint a committee, hire a proxy. This is one of the perils of the church evangelistically; we think we can save the world by a committee.

It is this principle that has caused the church to slip out from under the burden of its supreme work by introducing an evangelist, and paying him, giving the least effort, for the shortest time possible, to these activities. The revival does not endure and the evangelist is blamed. If evangelism is to abide and be genuine, if the revival is to stay, it must have its roots in local soil; soil which has been saturated with the blood of personal sacrifice and heartfelt service. Converts are like plants: having been transplanted, they have to get new rooting and new food, and they often wither and die because there is no warmth, no moisture of

## THE CORRECT MEASURE

love and sympathy, which naturally accompanies those who in the spirit of their condescending Lord, enter into the throbs of a real soul-saving movement; they need someone to tie to who has helped them through the struggle. A mother cannot nurse a child until she has given birth to a child; a church cannot nurse, train, culture, and permanently save converts if she knows nothing of the travail of soul that brings them forth. For it is not merely the question "of getting the man into the church," as someone has said, "but of getting the church into the man." Men can be manipulated into the church by mechanical process, but to get the church, the kingdom within men, they "must be born again."

### WE CANNOT IMPORT NOR ORGANIZE A REVIVAL

The church, for the most part, has been possessed of the idea that by surrendering all ordinary activities for the time being, and securing the services of men with

## THE GREAT COMMISSION

special gifts and evangelistic reputation, she might thus, almost as by actual transfer, come into possession of a great religious awakening. But revivals are not portable in any such sense; the weakness of movements here and there, under the direction of certain evangelists, is largely the result of an idle confidence that these men carry in themselves alone the secret forces of a great religious movement; the evangelists are not necessarily to blame, for the people would much rather have a revival thus than really pay the cost of one. Men of special gifts and wide observations are worth having for inspirational purposes, as kind of John the Baptists; but if the people themselves do not repent, the kingdom will not come.

Nor can we organize a revival. There is not an earnest minister among us who has not spent much time and thought to learn how to organize his forces for an evangelistic campaign. Organization is not to be discounted; for some of the energy and inspiration in connection with

## THE CORRECT MEASURE

spontaneous revivals is spent and lost for lack of organized effort and strong personal leadership. This, however, would be the organization of living, breathing, moving forces; but we cannot substitute organization for life. Machinery is valuable, but when machinery becomes supreme, or when it has the larger consideration in our evangelistic interest, it is our peril; and all machinery, to be of religious force, must have a heart put into it; organization such as this wonderful age affords us may be greatly used, and by it the kingdom be made to move by leaps and bounds if that machinery is under the dominance of those who, in the language of Ian Maclaren, "have an enthusiasm for humanity born from above."

## THE URGENCY OF THE INNER CONSCIOUSNESS

We have dwelt upon this principle of divine condescension as creative of the Christian vision and Christian attitude because it is this alone that can be de-



## THE GREAT COMMISSION

pended upon to furnish that unqualified consecration that makes us rescuers of men.

The principle that began back yonder behind the "God so loved the world" runs all through the life of Jesus, characterizes the great throbbing evangelistic enterprises of history, and must ever manifest itself in real effective soul-winning work. The condescension of the Son of God was the overflow of the divine heart. It was when the great heart of God could contain itself no longer, that "he gave his only begotten son," and that overflow of the divine heart is the secret of Jesus' soul urgency; it breaks through, even before (as some think) he was fully conscious of his saviourhood: "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" There is in that the undercurrent of soul urgency. When Jesus suddenly takes his departure from the limited program of the Jewish conception of a King without a cross, and astonishes them with his passage into Samaria, it was but the



## THE CORRECT MEASURE

overflow of his great heart, upon what to them was another world—Samaria; and the writer's very words are full of the suggestion of divine urgency: "He *must needs* go through Samaria." His great impassioned soul could not contain itself longer within the narrow, bigoted, and intolerant bounds of Galilee and Judæa alone. All along virtue went out of him; one cannot read of the entrance to Gethsemane, without feeling that a great inner pressure literally drove him to the garden, where he anticipated the cross. This is the secret of reaching human hearts—by conveying the impression that our interest is spontaneous, that it is born, not forced, that it comes of vision and passion.

There is always danger of the economic spirit entering our service—a purpose less than the absolutely unselfish. This too frequently appears in the consideration of the church. We sit down and count the cost of meetings; we discuss whether we can afford it; we go every night to *sup-*

## THE GREAT COMMISSION

*port* the services rather than out of a soul passion; if men discover this, they are not moved by our appeals, or captured by our efforts. Our service for God in the interest of a lost world, to be at its best, must be free from the formal and perfunctory, free from the mechanism of a program, free from the low ideal of times and seasons. It must be by the urgency of the inner consciousness, carrying with it the force of love's desperate determination.

“HE SAVED OTHERS, HIMSELF HE COULD  
NOT SAVE”

These words, unwittingly spoken, are the correct measure of the evangelistic spirit, and reveal the actual cost of saving the world. We cannot save ourselves and others; we cannot conduct the magnetism of Jesus Christ to a lost world through these lives of ours in sufficient measure to draw men to the Christ unless we lay them down in the consecration of “living sacrifices.” Jesus said: “And I,

## THE CORRECT MEASURE

if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." The pains of the cross must enter into his experience; men must be able to see him "nailed to the tree," and have forced upon them the vision of unqualified sacrifice; it was that which made those apostles in the Roman empire living sacrifices, and their lives, in turn, magnetic with the power of the cross. There is no human instrumentality equal to the task of saving this world except it be saturated with the strenuous, life-giving spirit of the cross of Jesus Christ.

This in no little measure accounts for the breaking down of the evangelistic life of the church in the last half century. A well-meaning, but insufficient type of consecration has been urged upon the church; a consecration that rests altogether too much with God, and leaves us too restful in the hands of God; this type began undoubtedly with a needed emphasis, but it was carried so far that it defeated itself. Consecration had come to mean so fully

## THE GREAT COMMISSION

a mere committal of life to God in a largely negative sense that it relieved of all responsibility, left everything with God to do; eliminating the vigorous, self-denying, life-giving elements of the cross, until a new or renewed definition of consecration seems to be necessary; and it is the shrinking in this luxuriant age from this exacting type of consecration that makes the present awakening come with such faltering step; it costs too much in "living sacrifices."

### WE MUST NOT PUSH THE WORLD OFF OUR HEARTS

The problem in these days is also greater because of the difficulty of getting the world upon our hearts. We have so many things urging attention, so much to employ our head and hands, so much to take our time and sap our energy; business life with its grasping ambitions, social life with its multiplied attractions, give small chance for the great matters of a lost world and its needs to press upon

## THE CORRECT MEASURE

our hearts; the disposition is to shun anything like a heart-burdening consideration of the world's needs; and whenever conditions are likely to press this great matter upon us until its interest shall crowd us with deep concern and anxiety the tendency is to push the world off our hearts and to give ourselves, perhaps, even more than usual to the consideration of general religious interests which do not burden us, and which furnish a plausible substitute, that does not greatly interfere with our social ease and commercial ambitions. We do not mean to be understood as urging that this spirit of Jesus's program is to be carried out by us in saving the world, because there is any real atoning virtue in the burdens we bear, and the sacrifices we make; but to the extent that we are the instruments of salvation, we must possess the spirit of Jesus, for we are under the great commission of Christ: "As the Father hath sent me, even so send I you." "He that will not take up his cross and follow me



## THE GREAT COMMISSION

cannot be my disciple," which does not mean an atoning cross but a cross having in it redemptive qualities to the extent of bringing men to feel how great is the love of Christ and how eager he is to save. For there is in every life, that lives to make others live, an "Inward Calvary." The mother enacts it every day she lives; and it is well understood that the missionary amid the untaught heathen, or those buried in the slums, must constantly realize this; they must feel the virtue pass out of them. Sometimes the preacher finds it hard to preach with a real passion, and he leaves his study, goes out on an errand of love to some poor "shut in," sits down amid sickness and gloom, or visits a ward in a hospital. Then he comes back to saturate his sermon with the spirit of Him who spent much time thus, and who is "touched with the feelings of our infirmities."

Life evermore is fed by death,  
In earth, in sea, and sky.  
And that a rose may breathe its breath,  
Something must die.



## THE CORRECT MEASURE

### “HE WENT A LITTLE FARTHER”

We have already pointed out that it was not a formal program which Jesus followed into the garden but the pressure of the world upon his heart, and the urgency of his inner consciousness under the dominance of condescending love responding. But these words stand out in the record as full of meaning; what a revelation they are! “And He went a little farther.” It was only a *little farther*, physically speaking, only a few feet, perhaps, just in the shadow hidden from view, but in the deeper sense of its inner meaning it was leagues away; indeed, a great gulf lay between where he, in the wakefulness of divine agony, sweat great drops of blood, and where his chosen friends slept peacefully. This is the spirit that is necessary to save the world; the spirit that makes us go “a little farther.” That spirit has inaugurated every great revival, revolutionized human society, and opened every dark land to the gospel of

## THE GREAT COMMISSION

Jesus Christ; this was the spirit which made Paul willing to be accursed for his brethren and kinsmen's sake; this spirit made Knox pray, "Give me Scotland or I die"; this spirit sent Livingstone to plant the cross in Africa at the cost of his splendid life.

Let the followers of Jesus today give the world enough chance to press itself upon their hearts, sending them into their gardens to struggle, and into Christ's service to toil; let them give themselves in that passion that disregards the listless sleepers, pushing on forgetful of toil and sacrifice in the passion of the Christ, and the evangelistic crisis will soon have passed, for the clouds of mercy will break upon the parched ground, the windows of heaven be opened, and a flood of salvation poured in upon a thirsty, waiting world.

## CHAPTER VI

### ABIDING EVANGELISM; A NEW EMPHASIS

For the past few years the church has been turning its attention to the problem and possibility of continuous evangelism, and is trying to get hold of the principle, become possessed of the spirit, and fashion its method of evangelistic activities and operations so that they will have in them a force of continuity that will save from reaction, and give larger guarantee of thorough and self-perpetuating movements.

The increased vision of the enormous character of the evangelistic problem, as we face the great masses piling up in our metropolitan districts, together with teeming millions of those now coming to our view as the open doors of the heathen world cause this vision to stretch out before us, make all to realize that neither facts nor faith give any ground for hope that the kingdom of Christ will ultimately

## THE GREAT COMMISSION

triumph by spasms of enthusiasm and periods of enterprise. There is a growing conviction that some process more nearly corresponding to Jesus's idea of the leaven in the meal is the only hope of the kingdom's coming. We do not believe there is either desire or disposition upon the part of the church to lessen emphasis upon genuine spiritual life and the "power not our own" which ever has, and must, characterize all genuine evangelism; but there is a profound feeling that something vital is lacking in all of this for permanently and hopefully grappling with the evangelistic situation; this emphasis does not alone furnish qualities sufficiently continuous and cumulative to stay the faith of the church.

Side by side with the spiritual life and divine energy, which comes from above, with which the impossible things are done, side by side with the evangelistic spirit must be the evangelistic life; or, in other words, in addition to the periodical, deliberate and organized effort of bringing men

## ABIDING EVANGELISM

to Christ, there must be just as earnest a determination to

### TAKE CHRIST TO MEN.

In that great sermon of Jesus which may be properly characterized "the constitution of the kingdom of God," he said, evidently intending it for his disciples to whom he was to give the great commission and for all who should come after them: "Ye are the light of the world." "Ye are the salt of the earth." Elsewhere he reinforced that same principle more specifically by the parable of the leaven. Strangely the Christian Church has unconsciously or unintentionally almost eliminated this great principle from its evangelistic thought and enterprise.

The decided assurance with which Jesus spoke of the coming of his kingdom must have been based upon that redeeming, revolutionizing, and conquering power of the gospel leaven working out through the life of men in every walk, everywhere, every day.



## THE GREAT COMMISSION

The "return to first principles" will involve this among other things, for it was most certainly with this emphasis that Jesus inaugurated his great movement. We can easily see how he emphasized the evangelistic life; from his policy we should gain this conception rather than that of any personal or organized evangelistic campaign; and we shall find this largely true of Paul also, if we do not read our modern views into his teaching and method. We do not mean by this that the developed policies of evangelism under direction of the apostles or later leaders of the Church of Christ are without full authority and divine ordering, but they are not more so, to say the least, than the methods set forth in the teaching and practice of the Christ himself. We have previously remarked that humanity is away from the church because the church is away from humanity; and that the church to win the confidence of the world must move out in an aggressive spirit of rescue. With equal emphasis we assert



## ABIDING EVANGELISM

### THE CHURCH MUST GO INTO THE WORLD, OR THE WORLD WILL COME INTO THE CHURCH

There are those among us who greatly bemoan and condemn the worldliness of the church; their idea of an unworldly church, hence a spiritual church, is in the exclusiveness of a negative attitude toward the world—an attitude of resistance of worldly influences through exclusion from them. This process never has kept the church from worldliness, and never will; the way to defend the church against worldliness is not by passive resistance alone but by aggressive effort to triumph over the world; not by staying away from it, but by carrying the saving, redeeming, and conquering elements of Christianity out into the world, and thus helping to shape its policies in keeping with the fundamentals of the kingdom. The church must go into the world or the world will come into the church. By taking the church into the world in this con-

## THE GREAT COMMISSION

nection we mean carrying the dignity, virtue, and self-denying principle of the kingdom into every department of life, all under the dominance of this supreme evangelistic spirit, and inflamed by the true evangelistic passion. If there is any virtue in genuine Christian personality upon which Jesus evidently expected to depend, the personality that incorporates his spirit and sends men "about doing good," then it will be readily seen that while it may take ten men to bring one to Christ, one man may take Christ to ten others; and if the value of taking Christ to men has any reasonable correspondence to the value of bringing men to Christ, this gives greatly increased ground of assurance of the kingdom's triumph. This emphasis will break down the barriers and remove the obstructions in the path of the church by making Christ and Christianity agree.

We will not lay less emphasis upon the great atoning work of Jesus Christ and our dependence upon him; we shall still

## ABIDING EVANGELISM

declare with just as much earnestness "there is no other name" that has saving power in it; but we must *accompany our faith in Christ's death by the practice of Christ's life.*

At this point let us not lose our balance, *for all unbalanced movements of Christianity have been temporary movements.* This has been the cause of loss of time and resources all through history. Revivals and reformations have come up and triumphed by restoring to emphasis some neglected truth; and then the church has sunk back in time by neglect of another truth through emphasis upon the one that brought about the renewal. And so age after age has the kingdom moved until periodical revivals seem to be the normal process, based upon the precedent of history. We must, therefore, in emphasizing this idea of the evangelistic life, guard against the danger of losing the force of the term "evangelistic." The evangelistic life is not merely one of passive consistency but a life so inflamed with the evan-

## THE GREAT COMMISSION

gelistic spirit that it is never wholly passive, because always imparting the saving power of the evangelistic touch. "Before that which Christ wrought out for us can be wrought out in us, before Christ's death for us can become Christ's life in us, we must meditate upon the truth of the gospel until it becomes inspiration, passion" (Butler).

This has been the hard thing to establish, and one of our evangelistic problems; we have had two distinct classes of people in the church, growing out of emphasis upon the two distinct phases of Christian truth: one class believing in what it calls practical Christianity, meaning by that a straightforward life, day by day, lived formally, and perhaps passively, in keeping with the fundamental principles of the Sermon on the Mount. This class has not emphasized evangelism as such, though possessed of some elements vital to it. The other class places chief emphasis upon those personal and organized activities that make for bringing men to

## ABIDING EVANGELISM

Christ. This classification is due chiefly to two causes—traditional teaching and personal temperament. These are not opposite but complementary forces, which should as far as possible be blended in one. This blending will come about, as we have already intimated, not by emphasizing one aspect of truth but both; by urging upon the people of zeal the necessity of more practical and vital living, and by making clear to the people of formal life the absolute necessity of impassioned service; in other words, the church must discern the facts and rise to them, namely, that the ultimate triumph of Christianity will be by an evangelistic spirit backed by a life, or a genuine life inflamed with a passion.

THIS WILL GIVE ENTRANCE TO COMMUNITIES FROM WHICH WE ARE NOW  
BARRED

Because we have meetinghouses in the midst of people where regularly we preach the gospel it does not follow that we have



## THE GREAT COMMISSION

real entrance to these people. Because we are able, with no one to molest and make afraid, to conduct periodical revival services with more or less respectable appearance of doing something it does not follow that we have evangelistic access to that community. China's walls are now down and missionaries are no longer barred, yet it does not follow that we have actual entrance to China; but if we have, as never before, we may see some special providence in barring these doors until the nations were less intolerant and more ready to be Christians, not only in their dispensation of the *gospel* of the Golden Rule, but in putting the Golden Rule into practice, in their commercial and governmental policies as well.

This balance of emphasis and the conditions that grow out of it will give more than a technical and nominal access to individuals and entrance to communities. When once you have convinced a community which for a half century, more or less, has been under the influence of and



## ABIDING EVANGELISM

paralyzed by a formal, lukewarm church of respectable standing, but no Christian passion, or, on the other hand, a church of spiritual exercises and periodical evangelistic zeal, void of practical piety, that these two great principles can be blended in one splendid consistency, complementing and reinforcing each other, then we will discover that this world is neither ignorant of, nor unconcerned about, the religion of Jesus Christ, but will be arrested in the face of such a miracle and led to think seriously of this great matter.

Jesus was heard gladly in the temple by the common people, because he lived before them a self-denying and uncompromising life, and caused that life to glow in saving passion toward a lost world. The common people are just the people we cannot reach today, yet the people who always have and always will incorporate the principles and spirit that saves the world, because they carry the world's burdens, and their heart-throbs are the very pulse of humanity.

## THE GREAT COMMISSION

### THIS LARGER CONCEPTION MEANS LARGER RESULTS

There is reason to believe that one of the chief causes of the failure of evangelism to sustain itself, has been the failure to aim at the larger, rather than the lesser, results. So long as the church depends chiefly upon professional evangelism, this is bound to be true; this is not a reflection upon the professional evangelist, it is inevitable, and comes from causes that annoy him as much, or more, than anyone concerned. His calling is dependent upon his success, and the only measure the church has been willing to put upon his success has been the number of tabulated conversions; and he has felt obliged to get results that would be accepted as such. Revivals have been discounted, and evangelists also, because these men have tried to do the quite impossible thing in a church and community, namely, have a great revival with large numbers of conversions where no evangelistic conditions

## ABIDING EVANGELISM

have been generated; and so results have been forced, and were therefore not genuine and abiding. The evangelist who creates new conditions, brings in a new atmosphere, puts the church in a new light and a stronger position in the community from an evangelistic standpoint, has an infinitely harder task, and may have accomplished much more for the kingdom, comparatively, than the man who, under favorable conditions, with good preparation for his coming, secures a large success in the number of persons converted.

We need to revise our evangelistic creed in respect to what evidence in results our faith shall rest upon. We must not exact so much in given periods of time, and in a certain number of services, and by operation of so much machinery, but, rather, emphasize the character of our effort, its quality as well as quantity, the general as well as specific results obtained, and, above all, the *conditions* that follow special effort both as to the possibility of maturing the fruit, and also of

## THE GREAT COMMISSION

perpetuating the movement; these latter are by far the truer criterions of the real force of an evangelistic effort.

This larger conception means ultimately the larger result, for this is exactly what the *evangelistic life* will do; it will not merely operate machinery with earnest, self-sacrificing effort "to bring men to Christ," but it will generate a condition by which the larger, deeper, more abiding results will obtain, through "taking Christ to men." This does not discourage working for immediate results, but it does relieve us from the peril (for such it is) of requiring results regardless of conditions, and thereby causing reaction and reflection; and it

### FURNISHES THE ONLY CONDITIONS FOR CONTINUOUS EVANGELISM.

We must learn to esteem not less highly the temporary effort, and rejoice not less in immediate definite results, especially when such come through a life and spirit toward which the church has gradually

## ABIDING EVANGELISM

moved, out of which breaks a splendid revival, and a large ingathering; and yet we must train ourselves to esteem more highly than we do, those processes whose definite results are less measurable, and whose influences are less inspiring, because they reach through months or years, culminating gradually, or at some distant point through a cumulative force, breaking, possibly, into a great revival far removed from the activities which began its generation.

We must be able to see that the revival that gathers one hundred people in two weeks, with such reaction as is likely to follow because of lack of preparation for and by the absence of evangelistic activities the balance of the year, is not to be compared in permanent effect to a movement that brings an average of two persons to Christ each week for the entire year with all the influence upon the church and community that such a spirit and life is bound to exert. Evangelism must no longer be considered as belonging



## THE GREAT COMMISSION

to some particular phase of church life but must season every department and temper all its spirit. It is being clearly demonstrated that even though pastors and people may be ever so conscientious, it is nearly useless to attempt evangelistic work by multiplying services, if the church in the truest sense is not in the spirit of it. It may be that genuine consecration in an unselfish spirit to the work of the church in its various fundamental activities, may have as much to do with ushering in a revival as multiplied services. By such means channels of divine energy may be opened which have long since been clogged by the semi-Christian motive with which our church work is frequently performed.

The careful study of the present situation suggests that the church must prepare itself by such continued policy from week to week and month to month as will bring about a condition of spontaneous evangelism. Special effort must be more and more the result of a condition in the



## ABIDING EVANGELISM

church that demands multiplied services for the purpose of gathering in the fruit of a spiritual quickening which the church in its normal activities has generated. This will, as previously intimated, demand a reconstruction of the evangelistic policy of the church, a complete readjustment of its life. The time has come with great urgency when the church must, and, we believe, will, rise to the vision of God and usher in a revival that will give us a wider vision of Christianity's meaning, a profounder sense of Christian responsibility, and intelligent, voluntary response to the all-commanding commission of our Lord, a keener sense of righteousness in congregation and community through the actual presence of God among his people, quickening conscience and furnishing the initiative for all true and effective reforms, a spiritual atmosphere in which sin is uncomfortable, spiritual life thrives, and evangelism becomes the normal state.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE PREACHER, AND HIS PART

There is a tendency in some quarters to depreciate the value of the minister's work as a preacher and leader. Only recently an eminent minister of an orthodox church, addressing a body of theological students on the eve of their entrance into the active ministry, made this sweeping assertion: "The day of preaching is past," and then went on to affirm that the chief work of the ministry of the future is to consist in other activities than that of preparing and preaching sermons. That there may be some need of larger emphasis upon certain lines of activity upon the part of the ministry, hitherto overlooked, and for which this practical age makes demands, there is little question but that we have reached a stage of intelligence and sense of duty upon the part of the Christian world that does away with the necessity of the prophet's voice and the

## THE PREACHER AND HIS PART

apostle's leadership we are surely not ready to concede.

### "AN APOSTLE OF JESUS CHRIST"

The above is the title which Paul assumes after his conversion on the Damascus road. To us Paul stands out as a character whose movements seem to be representative of the real position of the gospel ministry. Not that every minister shall be just like Paul, but his are the truest ideals to be aimed at. Such motives, impulses, ideals as controlled Paul have never appeared in a merely professional ministry, though that ministry were of highest order touching personal character, mental force, and purity of purpose. Such characteristics are the irrepressible convictions of one who is under the spell of "Woe is me if I preach not the gospel." Such a ministry, not merely "masters its subject but is mastered by its subject." The former may be enlightening and conclusive, but the latter alone makes men possessed of evangelistic power.

## THE GREAT COMMISSION

“An apostle of Jesus Christ.” There is something comprehensive and forceful in that title. It means a follower and a witness, a teacher, preacher, and leader, a missionary, and, in some measure, a religious general, for Paul possessed all these qualities; and to some degree the true missionary, or evangelist, to a lost world must have them. As surely as Saint Paul was the man for the hour in laying the foundations and setting in motion the currents of power in which were contained the revolutionizing elements of a great revival, so surely was this great all-controlling idea of apostleship the chief source of that power of personal leadership. Every great revival in history has surged out of the soul of some great man, not necessarily great in all respects, but great as an “apostle of Jesus Christ,” great in his conception of the Christian mission and in his devotion to it. When a man can have so marvelous a vision of the sweep of Christ’s purpose and power, and then can be so under the spell of carrying

## THE PREACHER AND HIS PART

out that purpose that he can say with a spontaneous burning fervor, "For me to live is Christ," that man stands at the very summit of greatness so far as the Christian mission is concerned.

### A CRUCIAL MAN

It has been well said, "We can hardly conceive what the Christian religion would have been but for the life and ministry of the apostle to the Gentiles." In a measure, nearly every movement of Christianity, every awakening, and every revival seems to depend in no little measure upon some crucial man in whom the apostolic mission throbs and flames. We need to return to an apostolic ministry not of traditions and customs, but a ministry which, though not sure of its historic connection with the earliest age, is sure of an infinitely greater, more authoritative and miracle-working commission—the commission of a living Christ to men, by a living spirit which takes the things of Christ, and on some Damascus road



## THE GREAT COMMISSION

makes these men the possessors of the sublimest vision and the greatest mission beneath which a human heart ever throbbed.

It is very apparent that the ministry has drifted away from this conception of its mission. We make this statement reluctantly; we wish it were not true; but one who has had occasion to move among the present-day ministry, and note with what statements they discuss the question of entrance to and departure from the ministry for other pursuits, cannot overlook this. Just at present we hear on every hand the lamentation of the Church of Christ over the insufficiency of ministerial candidates. To those who have always looked upon the ministry as a mission to which a man is called, and upon which he is sent, not of men but of God, the various reasons given in the wide range of these discussions which attempt to account for the lack of ministerial candidates are really a surprise. If there is reason for the assertion "that the day of



## THE PREACHER AND HIS PART

preaching is past," and the ministerial function no longer vital, it is due to this chiefly: that the ministry has drifted away from its apostolic commission, and with the absence of this apostolic sense, and the force it carries with it, the ministry comparatively fails; and hence the excuse, "The day of preaching is past."

The day of preaching is not past; the man with the apostolic vision of Christianity, the apostolic commission, conviction, and passion, never was in greater demand for the mission of awakening and reclaiming this lost world than today. If, however, preaching is to be in demand and the ministry retain its power and glory, it will have to return to the first fundamentals of the apostolic conception, and proclaim the real evangel of Christ to a lost world. To accomplish this, in this complex and distracting age, requires that men give themselves to careful and earnest consideration of the evangelistic need of the hour. The evangelistic preacher must be

# THE GREAT COMMISSION

## A SENSITIVE STUDENT.

By a sensitive student we mean one who, with unbiased mind, lays himself bare to such divine impressions as the man of vision and leadership must receive.

He must learn to appreciate the movements of God, which to the average man of today are lost amid the materialistic tendencies of the world, on the one hand, and the formal and mechanical processes of religion on the other. His attitude toward this great problem of how to save the world must be so reflective and intense that his heart will respond with sensitiveness to every indication of the divine presence and power. He must be something more than a mere surface observer, giving this matter an occasional thought, when incidentally or of necessity his attention is directed thereto. He must be able to detect the deep undercurrents of thought and life. This is, perhaps, the supreme weakness of the Christian consciousness in the ministry of today; it

## THE PREACHER AND HIS PART

observes only the surface and fails largely to apprehend God's movements. We are aware how busy is the average pastor, and how much of his time, of necessity, is taken and thought absorbed in working out the ordinary problems of church life, and responding to the almost innumerable calls for attention to things of little moment; but if he is to be sensitive to the divine leadership, he must give this subject large right of way in all his thinking until his mind takes such direction and his perception becomes so keen that he can, in some measure, thread the delicate ways over which God is leading in times of spiritual awakening.

If we are to train ourselves toward expectancy (and that is no little part of faith's conquering element), we must not obstruct the vision of the Divine Presence by keeping our eyes forever looking up the traditional paths over which so many times God has come down to this old world and spoken to it anew. The danger is that we shall train our thought to-

## THE GREAT COMMISSION

ward expectancy only in one direction.

God moves in a mysterious way  
His wonders to perform,

and the very mystery of it is often that it is an unexpected way. The vision of the mountains filled with horses and chariots stimulates our faith, but let us not lose the force of the whisper of the still small voice while waiting for the rushing wind. God has not yet exhausted all his surprises.

### HE WILL BE A PREACHER OF THE PROPHETIC NOTE

His voice will be as a voice in the wilderness; he will be as one having authority; a man with a real message, born today out of his own vision and conviction; a genuine herald, preaching not merely out of a book but out of his own consciousness of the Divine Presence and power. The book will furnish his basis of authority, and the Scripture, windows of illumination, both heavenward and earthward; but he will not have to go back

## THE PREACHER AND HIS PART

to Moses, David, John, nor Paul, but will, like these, give to men a present-day deliverance of his own soul on the signs of the kingdom's coming. His answer to inquiring humanity will be the same as of old, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved," but he will not be obliged to contend for Paul's authority; it will be his own announcement of the saving power of the present, living Christ. This will make him the freshest preacher in the land. We do not mean the most novel in a purely popular sense, though he will not live in the past; nor do we mean that he must have read every latest book, though, if out of these he gets the burning thoughts of living men, they will not harm; but he will be fresh in the truest sense, for he is keeping up with God. Evangelistic preaching is by many thought to be dry and tedious. Mere repetition of trite dogmatic statements, void of living, fiery personalities; preaching that emphasizes the authority of tradition is dry, but evangelistic

## THE GREAT COMMISSION

preaching that has its own authority, that is born today, that makes use of God's lessons in a world which God has not abandoned, but in which he is ever present, and above all, preaching that has behind it a personality, strong, sturdy, and magnetic, yet tempered with the gospel's matchless, modifying generosity, will in any age have both the ear and the heart of the world. The man who keeps in God's great laboratory where he is working no uncertain experiment in making over this old world, will be the freshest, most up-to-date man to be found, always far ahead of the ordinary thought and purpose of the world, and able to bring fresh light and inspiration to men.

The preacher who will learn the secret of effective evangelistic preaching, will not undertake

### EVANGELISTIC PREACHING FOR EFFECT.

Sometimes men have been caught with a spell of evangelistic desire, or have seen the fruitlessness of their ministry aside



## THE PREACHER AND HIS PART

from this, and have set apart a period of time, and have begun a new departure with an earnest determination to "preach for results," because the conditions demand it; and they have been surprised that they did not have larger success. This savors too much of evangelistic preaching for effect. Preaching to be thus effective must have deeper root than this. It must have connection with, and grow out of, all previous preaching; preaching, though not distinctly evangelistic, nevertheless, has this as the underlying motive in every sermon; a man cannot neglect these great truths and appeals eleven months out of twelve, or four years out of five, and then with sudden impulse and departure by unusual effort usher in a genuine revival of religion.

We have known some excellent men who, seeing the barrenness of their ministry, and awakening to the importance of cultivating this power, have given themselves over to it for a time, and not becoming proficient at once, they have gradually

## THE GREAT COMMISSION

dropped the idea, returning to the old notion that they are not called to be evangelists, nor even evangelistic. This process in a minister's life takes time, especially with men of certain ethical bent; temperament has much to do with the readiness with which this takes hold of men; nor can one who has been averse to this, or even utterly neglectful for years of it, expect to become possessed of it at once; he must continue to reflect, study the human urgency of the world, on the one hand, and the divine sufficiency and passion, on the other, until the fire of it kindles and burns within his soul, and his whole nature gradually comes under its sway. If he will continue honestly and earnestly this process, as surely as God has called him to this great apostolic mission of proclaiming a saving evangel to a lost world he will find evangelistic preaching breaking spontaneously out of his own soul, without regard to the schedule of times and seasons. Above all consideration of qualifications for such work,

## THE PREACHER AND HIS PART

without which all other qualities will not assure success, and with which men often have succeeded in spite of other disqualifications, is the absolute determination to

### STAKE ONE'S LIFE FOR A CAUSE.

One of the reasons why it is hard to keep the ranks of the ministry recruited, more significant than lucrative enticement, is this: that, as compared with other engagements in this stirring age, the ministry is a very tame proposition; for financial considerations it could not command the best, and ought not, and it has lost to many the glory of heroism, the thing which in ministry and in civil service has always drawn the best. Best soldiers are had in time of war, not in peace; drones are satisfied with drill and parade or guarding a fort, but ambitious men of stuff soon tire of that; they hunger for the glory of service. When the ministry ceases to be a great rescue work, because the church has abandoned the business, it will be less and less attractive to the

## THE GREAT COMMISSION

noblest men, especially those best fitted to do its work. The church makes the ministry to as great a degree as the ministry makes the church. A few generations of an ease-loving, selfish, commercialized church will produce a ministry void of the heroic qualities that have made men leaders of Christian forces in rescuing the world. When the church loses its evangelistic life and spirit, and wants ministers to speak only comforting words and indulge the church in its ease-loving course, it will secure men largely who are "hirelings," as no other inducement remains, and the hireling is useless in the service of Christ; the hireling cannot be trusted with the work of saving this world; he will not take the risks; "the hireling fleeth because he is an hireling."

### CONCLUSION

These are days which call for great things from the servant of God; the days in which the "greater works" are to be done; the comprehensiveness of the work

## THE PREACHER AND HIS PART

of the minister of today is such that he often becomes disturbed with the enormity of his task and the slight ripple he is making on the seething sea of human problems. If he is in dead earnest, he must be led to cry out again and again: "Who is sufficient for these things?" The current against which he struggles very nearly baffles him. Yet in our moments of clearest vision and truest faith the work we are about lifts itself so above all occupations of men and angels, and the all-commanding commission of Jesus our Divine Lord rests upon us with such urgency, that we catch the thrill of their inspiration, and cry out: "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

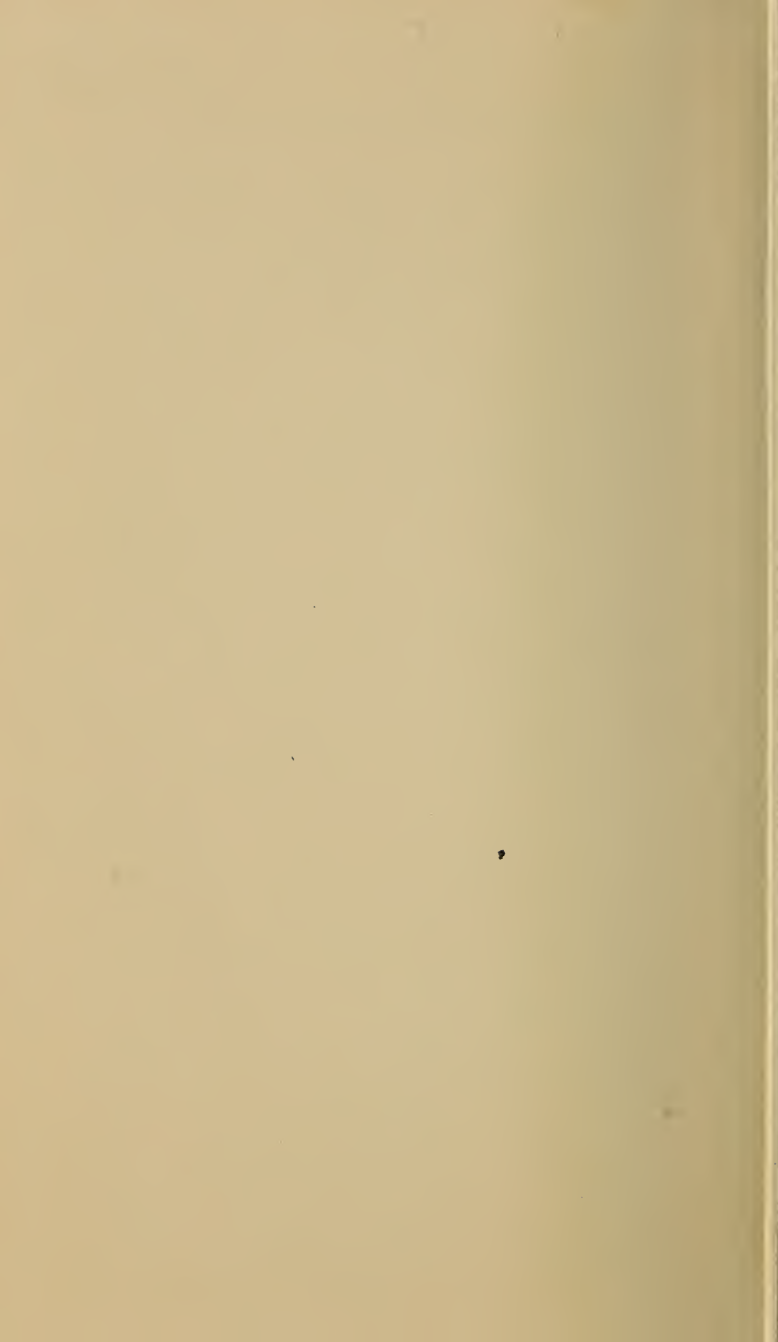
Mr. Weinel in his great book, speaking of what Paul accomplished single-handed and alone, actually turning the tide of the centuries in a most difficult age, ascribed his unparalleled achievements in the interest of the Christian faith to this. "There is a mighty power in a man who

## THE GREAT COMMISSION

stakes his life for a cause." This more than anything else is the great secret of the preacher's success in any age, as a leader of God's hosts in rescuing the world—the man in whom the "hireling" is never seen, but who without doubt or hesitancy as to his call to the gospel ministry absolutely loses himself in the supreme determination to "stake his life for a cause."









DEC 7 1907

Deacidified using the Bookkeeper process.  
Neutralizing agent: Magnesium Oxide  
Treatment Date: Oct. 2005

**PreservationTechnologies**

A WORLD LEADER IN PAPER PRESERVATION

111 Thomson Park Drive  
Cranberry Township, PA 16066  
(724) 779-2111



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 017 040 396 4